



Fact Sheet

AB 2093 – Skinner

Foster Youth Higher Education and Support Act of 2012

EXISTING LAW

Existing law establishes the segments of the public postsecondary education system in the state, including the University of California administered by the Regents of the University of California, the California State University administered by the Trustees of the California State University, and the California Community Colleges administered by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. Existing law establishes the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Emancipated Foster Youth, which requires the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to perform specified services to assist emancipated foster youth.

PROBLEM

On any given day more than 500,000 youth are in foster care across the United States. Nearly 80,000 live in California¹. Nationally half of all foster youth do not complete high school², and only 15% take the necessary courses to gain college admission³. Foster youth face barriers receiving the necessary academic preparation for college and obtaining the necessary information to complete college applications and access to financial aid. Not surprisingly, fewer than 10% of foster youth who graduate go on to college.⁴

In today's society, a college degree is almost a necessity to becoming economically self-sufficient. Yet very few foster youth are able to

continue their education after high school, and those that do often encounter significant obstacles that hinder their ability to succeed.⁵

THIS BILL

Foster care students who transition from high school to college campuses have needs that differ from those of their non-foster peers. Student services personnel at most post-secondary institutions are unfamiliar with or unprepared to address the unique needs of this population. Even programs that target low-income and first-generation college students are not designed to aid the specific challenges faced by former foster youth.

This bill would remedy that by enacting the Foster Youth Higher Education and Support Act of 2012 which would request campuses of the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California to designate a foster youth campus support program coordinator using new or existing resources to provide comprehensive support to students who are current or former foster youth on public postsecondary educational institution campuses. The goal of foster youth campus support programs is to provide former foster youth attending higher education with specialized academic, social and financial support.

SUPPORT

California Youth Connection (Sponsor)

¹ *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)* Needell, B.

² Ronna J. Cook, Are We Helping Foster Youth Prepare for Their Future?, 16 Child & Youth Services Rev. 213

³ Blome, Wendy W. What Happens to Foster Kids: Educational Experiences of a Random Sample of Foster Care Youth and a Matched Group of Nonfoster Care Youth. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal 14:41–53.

⁴ Emerson, J. & Lovitt T Encouraging News for College Bound Foster Youth.

⁵ See Wolanin, Tom. Higher Education Opportunities for Foster Youth: A Primer for Policy Makers. Institute for Higher Education Policy. (2005) Available at: <http://www.ihep.org/Pubs/PDF/fosteryouth.pdf>

Assemblymember Nancy Skinner, AB 2093: Foster Youth Higher Education and Support Act of 2012

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THE FACTS

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

BACKGROUND: In today's world, a college degree is almost a necessity to becoming economically self-sufficient. Yet limited resources in high school don't allow foster youth the ability to further their education. Foster youth face barriers receiving the necessary academic preparation for college and obtaining the information needed to complete the financial aid and college applications. Considering that youth are usually not being mentored or are the first in their families attending college, attending college is challenging. If foster youth do manage to overcome these barriers and enter college they still struggle to find the financial support to fund their living and education expenses and to receive the support on campus to successfully graduate from college. Despite the current awareness of issues foster youth face in higher education, programs like California College Pathways which aims to increase foster youth access to campus support programs on college campuses, there is still a huge gap between the achievements of former foster youth and the average population. Most foster youth have the goal of continuing their education, but very few are able to reach this goal. Instead, the statistics show that many foster youth struggle to survive after leaving foster care.


WHAT IS HIGHER EDUCATION?

Higher Education, also referred to as post-secondary education, is a branch of schooling after K-12 that is not required by the government for students to attend. Post-secondary education consists of public and private colleges in which students are responsible to seek out their own support.¹ Public colleges include community colleges which offers schooling to fulfill transfer requirements to a 4-year college or attain an Associate's Degree. Public schooling also includes vocational schools in which students are taught the skills needed to perform a particular job. California State Universities (CSU's) and University of California's (UC's) are also public and offer 4-year Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees as well as graduate degrees.² Private Universities are schools that are not operated by the government although they may receive public funding.³ From the year 2008 to 2009, tuition increased by 6.4% for public California colleges and 4.4% for private colleges.⁴

HIGH SCHOOL FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Issues foster youth face in high school: Success and support during high school is essential for youth being able to attend higher education. Although 70% of high school aged foster youth plan to attend college and 22% plan to continue their education beyond a college degree¹⁰ many obstacles keep them from pursuing their dream:

- Foster youth do not receive needed support and mentorship from social workers, providers, teachers and others regarding their education and potential.¹⁹
- 46% of foster youth do not complete high school⁵ (compared to 30% of the general population).⁶ Many foster youth lack the awareness and access in high school to pre-college opportunities and the pathways to



college. Foster youth are often not informed about critical financial aid deadlines nor do they have the personal resource of someone walking them through the college and scholarship application process.

- Foster youth lack access to college prep and necessary prerequisite courses. Fewer than 10% of foster youth who graduate from high school go on to college (as compared to 60 % of the general population).⁹
- Many foster youth are not prepared or able to take advantage of higher education opportunities because of negative school experiences and placement instability.¹⁷ As a result, foster youth have low levels of attainment and achievement in grades K-12.¹⁸ Statistics show that 75% of foster youth perform below grade level and over 50% are held back in school at least one year.⁷
- 39% of foster youth exhibit behavior and emotional problems (compared to 20% of the average population),⁸ which makes it difficult for them to achieve their educational goals.


High School Support: Some existing programs provide support to foster youth interested in pursuing higher education.

- Independent Living Services (ILP) provides services to assist youth in obtaining a High School Diploma, career exploration, and preparation for post-secondary training and start services for youth at age 14.²⁴
- Foster Youth Services (FYS) currently provides one liaison at each school district to help support youth record-keeping in order to coordinate instruction, counseling, tutoring, mentoring, vocational training, emancipation services, and training for independent living for youth ages 4-21. Currently it is mandatory for only one liaison at each school district be present for foster youth to utilize.

COLLEGE FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Issues foster youth face in college: Once a foster youth begins attending college, they are overburdened with financial and housing instability, and a lack of relational support. Youth must navigate the world of college and adult life by themselves—this is a much different story than the average population—which may be why statistics show that only 8% of former foster youth obtain a 2 year degree, less than 2% obtain 4 year degree, and less than 1% obtain a graduate degree.¹⁵

- Foster youth lack necessary funds and financial aid to attend college. Even with available scholarships 44% of youth are paying for school through loans and over 25% through their own employment.²¹ Unfortunately, the current budget for Chafee grants has been decreased because of the California budget deficit, meaning that this grant is not available to all eligible youth. Not surprisingly, money was the most common barrier (50%) youth reported for not attending school.²² Out-of-State Colleges have very limited financial assistance for foster youth.²³
- Studies have shown that 56% of foster youth did not have a savings or checking account upon emancipation.¹³ 50% of foster youth did not have a saving or checking account by age 21.¹⁴ Checking and savings accounts are not mandated to be a part of emancipation checklists creating unnecessary burdens for youth during college.
- Foster youth need individual assistance on campus to access campus support services and help navigate the complicated college systems. Campus Support Programs for foster youth have given foster youth an



added support system on college campuses with a 73% graduation rate, higher than the general population¹⁶

- Youth need emotional support to adjust to college life and crises that occur.²⁰
- Not all college campuses provide youth with the option to stay in dorms during winter and summer breaks leaving many former foster youth homeless during this time.

College Support:

- California Community College (CCC) Tuition Assistance provides virtually free tuition to former foster youth attending community colleges.
- Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program, also called Education and Training Vouchers (ETV's), became available in 2008 when California received about \$6.9 million to fund higher education costs for former foster youth. These grants that are up to \$5,000 per year (based on campus, identified need, and priority criteria) are available to foster youth up to age 22 for use at 4-year colleges (including out-of-state) and vocational schools. Due to increasing numbers of California foster youth now attending college, funding is less accessible for youth. Only 9% of the 35,664 eligible foster youth in the 2008-2009 school year received Chafee grants.²⁵ Additionally, Chafee Grants may be involved in upcoming budgets cuts.
- Counties can use Chafee ILSP funds not only for youth in care, but also to provide funding for higher education tuition, preparation, outreach and support services.
- Cal Grants: If youth meet GPA requirements and deadlines they are guaranteed a Cal-Grant. However, many foster youth are unaware of deadlines and struggle to maintain the required GPA.
- Foster care liaisons at community colleges: In 2006 the Foster Youth Success Initiative was launched which established foster care liaisons at each of the 110 Community College campuses.

Campus Support Programs:

- Guardian Scholars or Renaissance Scholars programs support former foster youth attending universities, colleges and trade schools. These programs differ at each campus and may include housing, academic, financial, or emotional support. Approximately 30 State and U.C. campuses in California have programs for foster youth, including Guardian Scholars programs and Renaissance Scholars. Unfortunately, programs like these assist only 5% of former foster youth.²⁶

IN PROGRESS

- 17 states have college tuition waiver programs at all public colleges and universities for former foster youth --California DOES NOT. CYC efforts to sponsor bills to create a California tuition waiver programs at public higher education institutions have been unsuccessful.²⁷

LEGISLATION:

- **Extending Transitional Services to 21**: Last year CYC and other child welfare advocacy organizations co-sponsored AB 12. It has passed through the Assembly and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee now. We will know in the next few months if it will pass into legislation. AB 12 will allow California to utilize federal funds instead of using state or county funds to extend transitional services until the age of 21.



- **Attending same high school while in care:** In 2010 AB1933 was proposed and is now pending approval. If passed, it will allow foster youth to attend the same school for the duration of foster care placement. This bill has not made it to the governor for his vote.
- **Priority housing on UC and CSU campuses:** In 2009, CYC helped to pass AB 1393 which requests that the California Community Colleges, the University of California (UC), and the California State University (CSU) give priority to current and former foster youth for on-campus housing as well as priority for housing that is open the most days in a calendar year to ensure stable housing for foster youth throughout their college education. However, on-campus housing in dorms at UC's and CSU's tends to be very expensive.
- **Not including parents in financial aid applications:** In 2007 a new federal law, HR 2669 was passed, allowing youth adopted after their 13th birthday the choice not to include their parents' income to determine their need for financial aid.
- **Expanding Foster Youth Services:** In 2006 CYC sponsored AB 2489 that would have helped prepare more foster youth for college by expanding Foster Youth Services, creating tuition grants at public colleges, expanding the Cal-Grant and Chafee Grant program for foster youth, establishing housing preferences and year round housing on college campuses, and expanding Campus Support programs so more former foster youth receive on campus support services. AB 2489 didn't pass but the budget funded 2 parts of the bill: expanding Foster Youth Services program, a California Department of Education "education support program" that helps foster youth graduate high school, and matching state funding for the Chafee Grant (ETV) federal funding so more youth can receive this important financial aid. CYC reintroduced this bill in 2007 (AB 1578) however it was still unsuccessful due to California budget problems.
- **New education rights for youth:** From 2004 to 2005 CYC helped pass 3 laws that create new education rights for foster youth (AB 490, AB 1858, and AB 1633). However, few youth have been informed of their education rights so that they can take advantage of the help that is available. Working on implementation of these laws will allow more foster youth to be prepared and able to take advantage of higher education opportunities.
- **Higher education information for foster youth:** In 2004 AB 1639 was passed which requires all foster youth be provided higher education information including courses necessary for vocational training and college and financial aid.
- **Outreach and retention for foster youth:** In 1996 AB 2463 was passed which requires California State Universities (CSUs) and California Community Colleges to provide outreach and retention services to foster youth to help them enroll and graduate from college, including ensuring housing needs. However most campuses are unaware of this law or do not implement this aspect.

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ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2093

Introduced by Assembly Member Skinner

February 23, 2012

An act to add Article 6 (commencing with Section 89350) to Chapter 3 of Part 55 of Division 8 of Title 3 of the Education Code, relating to foster youth education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2093, as introduced, Skinner. Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and Support Act of 2012.

Existing law establishes the segments of the public postsecondary education system in the state, including the University of California administered by the Regents of the University of California, the California State University administered by the Trustees of the California State University, and the California Community Colleges administered by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. Existing law establishes the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Emancipated Foster Youth, which requires the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to perform specified services to assist emancipated foster youth.

This bill would enact the Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and Support Act of 2012, which would additionally require the California State University, and request the California Community Colleges and the University of California, to establish foster youth campus support programs, which are separate from the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Emancipated Foster Youth, to provide comprehensive support and outreach to current and former foster youth

in an effort to retain foster youth in higher education. The bill would request campuses of the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California to designate a foster youth campus support program coordinator using new or existing resources. The bill would require the State Department of Social Services to annually notify foster youth 13 years of age or older, and those foster youths' caregivers, of the postsecondary educational support provided to them pursuant to this bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Article 6 (commencing with Section 89350) is
2 added to Chapter 3 of Part 55 of Division 8 of Title 3 of the
3 Education Code, to read:

4
5 Article 6. Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and
6 Support Act of 2012
7

8 89350. (a) This article shall be known, and may be cited, as
9 the Foster Youth Higher Education Preparation and Support Act
10 of 2012.

11 (b) It is the intent of this article to provide comprehensive
12 support to students who are current or former foster youth on public
13 postsecondary educational institution campuses.

14 89351. (a) The California State University shall, and the
15 California Community Colleges and the University of California
16 are requested to, establish foster youth campus support programs
17 to provide comprehensive support and outreach to current and
18 former foster youth in an effort to retain foster youth in higher
19 education.

20 (b) Campuses of the California Community Colleges, California
21 State University, and University of California are requested to
22 designate a foster youth campus support program coordinator using
23 new or existing resources.

24 89352. The State Department of Social Services shall annually
25 notify foster youth 13 years of age or older, and those foster youths'

- 1 caregivers, of the postsecondary educational support provided to
- 2 them pursuant to this article.

O